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Security Council

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Thursday, 13 June 2002, 4.40 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wehbe	(Syrian Arab Republic)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question:

Letter dated 11 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/655)

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02-42505 (E)

The meeting resumed at 4.40 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Saudi Arabia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The ever-deepening cycle of repression and violence in the Middle East makes it more than ever necessary to make rapid progress in the renewed efforts to reach a just, peaceful and comprehensive settlement. The situation in the Middle East is, as the Secretary-General has often said, one of the world's truly dangerous fault lines. Manifest injustice, instability, insecurity, a frozen political landscape: these pose an unacceptable and continuous threat to the region and to international peace and security. The international community has a clear responsibility and duty to move beyond rhetoric and language. Not to act now would be a dereliction of duty to the people of the region and to the cause of international peace and security.

We and others have said many times in this Chamber that no solution will be found through terrorism or any other form of violence or through military action. Ireland, for this reason, calls once again for an immediate end to Israeli military occupation; for the full implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002); for an end to all forms of terrorism; for full support for efforts by the Palestinian Authority to institute reforms; for an end to the harassment of the presidential compound in Ramallah; for the early convening of an international conference; and for support for the ongoing efforts of the "quartet" and regional actors towards a peaceful solution.

Acts of terrorism are not only deeply wrong in themselves; they bring great suffering on the Palestinian people, and do not bring forward by one day the achievement of their legitimate aspirations. Ireland condemns all such acts.

The Government of Israel has every right to defend its citizens against terrorism. It must do so, however, through measures that are in accord with international humanitarian law. Repression and the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories will inevitably breed more of the hatred and resentment upon which terrorism feeds.

The violence and destruction carried out by the Israeli Defence Force at the Palestinian presidential compound in Ramallah are deeply reprehensible and, furthermore, are counterproductive. These attacks place in grave danger the physical security of Chairman Arafat, who is the elected leader of the Palestinian people, and therefore an essential partner in the peace process. They also militate against the efforts currently under way to achieve reform in the Palestinian Authority.

It makes no sense to call on the Palestinian Authority to take measures to combat terrorism, while at the same time destroying the means necessary to implement such measures and refusing the political perspective necessary to support them.

The present Government of Israel must be brought by its friends to a realization that its present reliance on close security control of the entire Palestinian people will not bring the Israeli people the security that they deserve. It failed in the past and it will fail again. The only way to peace is through an agreement that meets the legitimate national aspirations on all sides.

It is vitally important to put in place a framework for the long-delayed achievement by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights and for the conclusion of a just and peaceful settlement between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, who are fated to live side by side, and between Israel and all its neighbours.

It is absolutely clear that the parties cannot now reach a settlement on their own. Current efforts on the part of the international community to help them find a way forward must be vigorously and urgently pursued. This is profoundly in the interest of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

This is not just a local issue, but one with major regional and indeed global implications. It is also, therefore, profoundly in the interest of the entire international community that a lasting and just settlement is reached. The time has come to convene an international conference. The aimlessness and drift that have taken hold must be shaken loose. Every day that passes without constructive action magnifies the risk that further and perhaps far greater violence will be unleashed.

There is no room for delay or preconditions. The three problems identified by the Secretary-General — occupation, violence and economic misery — have to be addressed, and addressed urgently, in parallel.

The blueprints are there, in abundance. In addition to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), we have the Saudi initiative, endorsed at the Arab League Summit in Beirut, we have our own resolution 1397 (2002), we have the proposals made recently by the President of Egypt and we have statements of vision by regional and international leaders. In effect, a virtual consensus has emerged in the international community.

We need now to see the leadership and the statesmanship that would take advantage of this unprecedented moment in the history of the Middle East conflict and push it vigorously towards a just and lasting solution.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Israeli and Palestinian relations continue to deteriorate. The suicide attacks against Israeli civilians and the Israeli reprisals against Palestinians, which have led to the death of people, are only strengthening the logic of confrontation. This does not help ensure security for both sides or their legitimate interests. Furthermore, all this seriously complicates efforts to achieve a political settlement of the crisis.

The most serious concern has been raised by the humanitarian disaster in the Palestinian territory. As a sponsor of the peace process and an active participant of the "quartet" of international mediators, Russia is undertaking energetic steps to remove Israeli and Palestinian relations from the vicious circle of confrontation. To that end, the Russian Government is in constant contact with the Israeli and Palestinian representatives and the leaders of the Middle Eastern States. The special representative of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation is in the region almost constantly. The situation was discussed comprehensively within the framework of the meeting of the G-8 Foreign Ministers meeting of 12 June, held in Canada.

During the past month the Security Council has adopted several decisions that have set out the road map for overcoming the crisis and for stabilizing the situation, as well as for moving towards a political settlement, including the establishment of a Palestinian State to exist peacefully alongside Israel with internationally recognized borders. We believe that the priority task at this stage is the development of machinery for the parties' compliance with existing Security Council resolutions. That guides the efforts of the "quartet".

The coming meeting of the "quartet" on 14 June in Washington should be an important step in efforts designed to dissolve the tensions in Palestinian-Israeli relations and to establish the conditions for moving to a political settlement, including through holding an international conference on the Middle East. The Security Council's task is to help in these efforts in every way possible and to ensure it the support of the international community. Attempts to use the Council Chamber for mutual recrimination and all types of argumentation is counterproductive. It only makes the work of the "quartet" and many Arab countries to achieve compliance with United Nations resolutions more difficult.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): It is a tremendous joy to see you sitting in that chair, conducting this meeting, Mr. President. I must apologize. I have been practising my Arabic, but when I came here, I forgot all of it, so I cannot greet you in Arabic. But it is a tremendous joy to see you there, Sir. On behalf of our delegation, we wish to congratulate you on assuming the presidency for the month of June 2002.

On 2 June 2002, a ministerial delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement visited Ramallah and met with President Arafat in an expression of solidarity with the President and the people of Palestine.

President Arafat briefed the Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement on the latest developments, including the implementation of new restrictive

measures against the Palestinian people, which have effectively resulted in the balkanization of the occupied territory.

The ministerial delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated the movement's outrage at the intensification of the illegal Israeli occupation, the killing, the vast destruction, the economic strangulation and other atrocities committed against Palestine and its people, including the continuation of settlement activities, especially in and around East Jerusalem.

The ministerial delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated the movement's support for the principle of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. They reaffirmed the need for Israel to withdraw to the 1967 borders.

The delegation of Ministers congratulated President Arafat on the signing of the Basic Law of Palestine, which is an important step towards the establishment of a constitutional law of Palestine.

The ministerial delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement also expressed its support for all international efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution.

In that context, the Movement unequivocally affirmed its support for the Arab peace initiative and for the effort of the "quartet". The Non-Aligned Movement delegation of ministers noted that those efforts by the international community should form the basis of an international conference aimed at the establishment of a road map for the attainment of a lasting peace and on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and of the Madrid Conference terms of reference on land-for-peace principles. The Non-Aligned Movement delegation of ministers concluded the visit by wishing President Arafat and the people of Palestine success in their endeavours to find a peaceful solution to this long-standing conflict.

Now that the Non-Aligned Movement has actually visited Palestine and has seen for itself the situation on the ground, its sense of urgency is even greater. The Non-Aligned Movement remains convinced that something will have to be done about restarting peace negotiations in the Middle East, or the world will risk a regional conflagration with potentially devastating consequences.

As the Council is aware, the Israeli Army has once again attacked the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, directly endangering the life of President Arafat in the process. The fact that the Israeli Army enters and leaves Palestinian cities and refugee camps should be an even greater cause for alarm. The reason is that the Israeli Army believes that by maintaining a quiet siege of the Palestinian territories, it can fool the international community into believing that the situation is actually improving. In actual practice, Israel has long since carved the occupied territories into a series of bantustans, has forced the closure of offices of foreign representatives in Ramallah, and has barred diplomats and journalists from access to a number of sites in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The ongoing military incursions, curfews and blockades serve only to deepen the humanitarian crisis and to paralyse the already devastated Palestinian economy. Those violent actions, therefore, inevitably generate further frustration, desperation and violence. The time has come for Israel, the occupying Power, to acknowledge that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination cannot be thwarted by military might or by attacks on their legitimately elected leader.

We fail to see how the Palestinian Authority can be expected to implement effective reforms and to establish conditions of common security if the Security Council does nothing to prevent the wholesale destruction of the Palestinian Government's institutions. We therefore call on the Council to take action immediately to ensure full compliance with its resolutions, particularly resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2003).

Perhaps even more importantly, the Council should seriously consider visiting Palestine, as the Non-Aligned Movement has already done. The Council should speak to people on the ground and assess the situation for itself, as the Movement has done. Otherwise, the world will always conclude that the Council will remain idle while Israel pursues the hopeless task of trying to guarantee security by perpetrating illegal acts of collective punishment against a civilian population. All acts of violence against innocent civilians, whether they are Israeli or

Palestinian civilians, should be condemned, regardless of who perpetrates them.

The Non-Aligned Movement wishes to reaffirm once more its principal position that Israel's security and peace in the Middle East will not be achieved until the people of Palestine have a State of their own with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, and sisterly Syria on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We have every confidence in your abilities and in the success of your presidency.

There was every reason to call for the convening of this open Security Council meeting on the question of Palestine to follow the development of events and incidents in the Palestinian territories, which we believe must be perceived primarily as an issue of occupation. Addressing that issue requires, on the one hand, a political vision and, on the other, the dispatch of a neutral international third party.

First, this question must be considered primarily as an issue of occupation, with all its attendant practices, including the suppression of rights. It is the last remaining situation of occupation faced by the international community. The reason for that situation is the occupier's rejection of the international will, of Security Council resolutions and of all other international instruments and agreements, in particular those pertaining to occupation and its practices.

In our view, and in the view of the entire international community, the most important reason for this impasse is the Council's inability to deter the occupier and, by the means provided under the provisions of the Charter, to compel it to respect the resolutions of international legitimacy. We have come up against that fact again and again in the Council. The occupying Power continues to defy all international norms, while the Council regrettably remains a prisoner to a lack of the necessary political will. That, in turn, has freed Israel from responsibility and accountability under international norms and the texts and instruments of the United Nations itself, in particular those of the Council.

Secondly, in the light of the representative of Israel's statement this morning, we believe that to consider the question of Palestine from the perspective of the Palestinian people's reactions to the practices of occupation on the one hand and the occupying Power's escalation of those practices in response on the other distracts us from the core of the question and its political foundations. The issue is one of occupation, and all occupations generate legitimate resistance until they are brought to an end.

In the absence of a political vision for the resolution of the question of Palestine, how can we not expect the Palestinian people to reject occupation as a permanent situation and its practices as natural? Indeed, no actions to resist occupation took place following the Madrid and Oslo conferences, because the Palestinian people had pinned all their hopes and expectations on peace treaties that they expected would lead to a just, lasting and comprehensive political settlement of the question of Palestine.

However, without any light at the end of the political tunnel, as is the case now, it is pointless for any political or military authority, however influential, to wager continually on the security option alone in the absence of a political vision to resolve the question.

One need only read the op-ed article written by the head of the Israeli Government that appeared last Sunday in a United States newspaper to see that the Israeli Government has no intention of opening up the political horizon.

Thirdly, the only solution lies in opening up the political horizon, so that all parties can enjoy their rights and abide by their obligations. The role of the international community in this respect is to internationalize the settlement through an international peace conference encompassing all positive ideas, views and initiatives. Such a conference should be based on previous agreed frameworks, in order to realize the vision of two independent States coexisting within secure international borders, in keeping with the decisions of the international community and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Fourthly, along with a political vision, there must be a neutral third party on the ground to serve as a

deterrent and as a security guarantee to all parties, in order to put an end to the cycle of action and reaction.

In this regard, it would be sufficient to follow up on the proposal made by the Secretary-General to set up a multinational force to separate the two sides, with a view to ensuring their security. Indeed, that security will never be guaranteed by the policy of fragmenting Palestinian territories — separating Palestinian lands and isolating them from each other — or by besieging the Palestinian people, restricting their movement and stifling their economy.

The situation today requires that we keep an open mind and deal with the political and humanitarian realities in all their dimensions, both present and future, in order to save the entire region from an unknown and potentially dangerous fate. In the context of the current delicate international situation, this requires that all of us be level-headed and that we look to the future from the perspective not of narrow interests but of peaceful coexistence among States, nations and civilizations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Mr. Papa Louis Fall, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to whom the Security Council addressed an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. I am confident that under your able leadership the work of the Council will be carried out in a constructive and efficient manner. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate your talented predecessor, Ambassador Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations, on the exemplary manner in which he steered the work of the Council during the month of May.

I am grateful to you and to your esteemed colleagues on the Council for having given me once again the opportunity to address the Council in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

(spoke in French)

I should like to take this opportunity, through you, Mr. President, to ask the representative of Guinea to please convey our heartfelt congratulations to Ambassador François Fall on his well-deserved promotion to the distinguished post of Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea. We extend to him our best wishes for every success in the mission he will be carrying out in the service of his country's diplomacy.

(spoke in English)

In recent days, it has become ever clearer, according to most observers, that the occupying Power — Israel — under the Government of Prime Minister Sharon, is apparently intent on destroying the Palestinian Authority, the entire framework of the peace process and the prospect for the resumption of a meaningful political dialogue for peace in the region.

Our Committee has also been very disturbed by the situation in Ramallah. Although it appears that the Israeli troops have, for now, pulled out of the city, because of the siege, closures and harsh restrictions on movement, the new Palestinian Cabinet has been unable to meet for the past three days. The little good news that there is, is that, following the Israeli withdrawal, the Cabinet finally met for the first time earlier today. Other Palestinian towns, both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, are also suffering under continuous closures and regular incursions. The extrajudicial detention and killing of civilians continues on a daily basis, as do illegal settlement activities.

In the face of all this, the Israeli Prime Minister insists on commanding the moral high ground and on unilaterally dictating the terms of settlement of the conflict. It appears that an attempt is being made to reinterpret Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 242 (1967), and the principle of land for peace, so that they will suit Israeli goals with a long-term interim arrangement, which is mentioned as the maximum the Palestinians can get and can expect. This certainly has nothing to do with a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and it sets a very dangerous precedent of distorting the

intention of the international community and the decisions of its deliberative organs to serve one's own ends. What the occupying Power is trying to do is unacceptable and should be condemned as such in no unclear terms by the international community and by this body.

To what extent can the Council tolerate the contempt with which its resolutions, including resolutions 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002) and 1405 (2002), are treated by the Israeli Government? To what extent can all norms of international legitimacy, such as those enshrined in the Fourth Geneva Convention, be flouted by any particular State? The Council should seriously ponder this, and it should ponder the impact of its prolonged inaction on its own credibility and on that of our Organization as a whole. What is needed most of all is a clear framework for the immediate resumption of negotiations between the parties, with the active involvement of the international community and within a specific time frame.

Negotiations have to take place between the parties, but they cannot start from zero or from nowhere, and they cannot be highjacked by the occupying Power, which has the military upper hand and wants to dictate the terms. As members of the Council know, there is a clear outline of the final settlement, consisting of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), as well as other resolutions and decisions of representative organs of the international community. Within this framework the parties should be invited to negotiate on specific issues, such as alteration of the 1967 borders and options for refugee repatriation. A party refusing to participate in this process, or attempting to stall or undermine it, should, from the start, be warned of severe consequences. The Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut Summit last March has gone a long way in the right direction. Our Committee thinks that Israel has to reciprocate without any further delay, without any attempts at occlusion and without any preconditions and demands. The leadership of all sides should face their responsibilities.

Before concluding, let me return briefly to the issue of attacks on innocent civilians to say once again that our Committee joins the world community in strongly condemning such acts, irrespective of their provenance, irrespective of the circumstances and irrespective of the motivation of the perpetrators.

The international community has unanimously agreed that the State of Palestine has to be established and that it must coexist in peace with the State of Israel. Mere visions of that desired outcome are not sufficient. The suffering of the Palestinian people should not be allowed to last much longer. Those visions have to become a reality as a matter of urgency, and the Council has a historic responsibility to clear the way and oversee the process to that end. Our Committee looks forward to prompt and decisive action by the Council.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Fall for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): The Council is again meeting today to discuss the situation in the Middle East, as a result of the latest incursions by Israel in the occupied territories, particularly in Ramallah, the very seat of the Palestinian leadership. Just like the unending cycle of violence that has plagued the Middle East, it seems that the Council itself is getting drawn in a logic of action and reaction without being able to do anything concrete that will end the violence and bring a lasting solution to the Middle East problem. Indeed, in the last few months the Council has met on numerous occasions, each time because the situation on the ground had become so grave and serious that the spill-over effects could have had tremendous consequences both to the peace process and to stability in the region. On some occasions, the Council has even adopted what could be termed as important resolutions, but each one of them has remained a dead letter and has been completely ignored by the party concerned.

The question that we should be asking ourselves today is whether the Council can continue in this logic without being able to ensure that its resolutions and recommendations are fully enforced. Or is it time for it to stop being reactive and seriously to address the root cause of the problem and come up with appropriate solutions? By taking this approach my delegation does not mean to undermine what is currently taking place in the occupied Palestinian territory or in Israel. We believe that the situation is indeed very serious, and we condemn the latest incursions by Israeli forces into Ramallah. We consider those incursions totally inadmissible. We equally condemn the attacks perpetrated on Israeli civilians by the suicide bombers. We believe that such actions on both sides are counter-productive and will only make the resumption of

dialogue and negotiations between the two parties more difficult.

We are also extremely sympathetic with regard to the plight of the Palestinians, who are subjected to atrocities of all kinds during such incursions. As an expression of support to, and solidarity with Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian people, a delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement led by the South African Foreign Minister, Ms. Zuma, and comprising, among others, the Foreign Minister of Mauritius, visited Ramallah earlier this month. Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa provided the Council with a report of that visit earlier, and we would like to associate ourselves fully with his statement.

Peace cannot be achieved in the Middle East until there is genuine commitment by the parties involved to take forward the various plans and initiatives that have recently been proposed. Along with the commitment of the two parties, there is also an important role for the international community to play in order to bring both sides to the negotiating table.

On the Palestinian side, the announcement by Chairman Arafat that major reforms would be undertaken within the Authority and that presidential elections would be held by the end of this year or early next year is a major step forward. We welcome such a development and we urge the international community to give its full support and assistance in order to enable Chairman Arafat to concretize those reforms.

On the Israeli side, we urge Prime Minister Sharon to reciprocate the steps announced by Chairman Arafat and to take concrete action on the ground to demonstrate his willingness to make peace. In that regard, automatic retaliations involving Israeli forces after each terrorist attack will not help the ongoing peace process. Nor will the continuation of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. In the last 18 months of Mr. Sharon's premiership, there has been a 40 per cent increase in such settlements. This seriously undermines the confidence-building measures which are so crucial for resumption of constructive dialogue and negotiations.

It is also important that Israel refrain from attacking the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian Authority, especially if it wants the Authority to effectively clamp down on suicide bombers. It is illogical to conceive of a situation where a weakened and dismantled Authority can exercise control over such elements. In fact, each time there has been an attack on Chairman Arafat's headquarters, suicide attacks have followed.

As regards the international community, while we support the efforts of Washington and the "quartet", it is essential that their combined efforts be aimed at bringing a ray of hope, so that the Palestinian people can expect to have a homeland of their own. The creation of a Palestinian State with boundaries which will ensure the security of the Israeli State seems to be the only outcome which can bring peace and stability to the region. It is therefore important that the efforts of the international community be focused on that outcome.

It is equally important that the international community help rebuild the Palestinian infrastructure, which has been almost completely destroyed by violence on the ground and by indiscriminate and disproportionate Israeli military action. Likewise, the Palestinian security structure needs to be rebuilt in order for it to be effectively in control of the situation on the ground.

The whole world is eagerly looking towards the Middle East peace conference announced by the "quartet" last month. We believe that the conference should seriously consider the proposal of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, which was endorsed by Arab leaders at the Beirut Summit. Let us ensure that the conference not fail and, more importantly, that it not fail the people of the Middle East.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): We are deeply troubled by ongoing violence in the Middle East, including most recently Tuesday's suicide bombing in Herzliya, which killed an Israeli girl, and yesterday's shooting death of a Palestinian boy in Gaza in an exchange of gunfire between Palestinian gunmen and the Israeli army. The conflict is exacting a devastating daily toll on Israelis and Palestinians.

Our message to both parties has been clear and consistent. It is essential that both sides, Israel and the Palestinians, consider the repercussions of any action they take today for the broader goal of achieving peace tomorrow.

Chairman Arafat and other Palestinian leaders must speak clearly to their people and tell them that terror and violence cannot help the Palestinians achieve their national aspirations. They must move decisively

to confront terror and violence, as demanded in resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002). Condemnations of terror with caveats are not enough. These do not ease the fears of ordinary Israelis, nor do they dissuade the misguided would-be bombers from their deadly missions.

In 2002 alone, there have been at least 23 suicide bombings, in which 130 Israelis were killed and more than 1,000 wounded. There can be no defence for the intentional killing of civilians or support for those who engage in terrorist bombings, which are proscribed by international humanitarian law, including recent United Nations conventions and Security Council decisions. These attacks in reality set back the Palestinian people's effort to attain their national aspirations and create security conditions that make it much more difficult for Israel to ease its policy of tight closures around Palestinian areas.

We need to speak plainly. Safe haven for those who finance, plan, support or commit terrorist acts must end. That is a Chapter-VII decision of the Security Council in resolution 1373 (2001). Only last week, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, from its headquarters in Damascus, claimed credit for the horrific car-bomb attack on a public bus in Israel that killed 17 and wounded 30. This was an act of terror. It was not resistance. It was not martyrdom. It must be condemned, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Those who harbour the people ordering such acts of terror, wherever they are, are under an obligation from the Council to take action against them.

We continue to recognize Israel's right to self-defence, but both Israel and the Palestinian Authority have to do all they can to create and sustain an environment for political progress. That means following the path set out in the recent resolutions of the Council. For Israel, that includes easing of closures and lifting restrictions that impede the access of United Nations and humanitarian organizations to the Palestinian civilian population in need of assistance, as called for in Security Council resolution 1405 (2002).

We believe that there is an opportunity to turn the current situation around, and we call on both parties to build on the diplomatic momentum President Bush has generated. President Bush has met with key regional leaders, most recently with Egyptian President Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon. President Bush raised with Prime Minister Sharon the need to ease the lives of ordinary Palestinians, who have seen their economic prospects plummet over the course of the conflict. Today, President Bush met with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, and tomorrow Secretary of State Powell and National Security Adviser Rice will meet with Mr. Nabil Shaath of the Palestinian Authority. On Friday, the United States will also host a meeting of the "quartet" envoys. We are using these intensive discussions to try to open the door to movement away from terror and violence and back to the negotiating table. That includes the holding of a ministerial-level meeting this summer.

President Bush has outlined the main elements of our strategy. The first is establishing effective Palestinian security performance. The second is renewing a serious political process that aims at a two-State solution and that brings hope to Palestinians and Israelis alike. The third is responding to humanitarian needs and building strong, responsible Palestinian Authority institutions in preparations for statehood. On this last point, we have seen some positive steps. More important, we see a strong Palestinian voice calling for reform. This is their initiative.

The three-part strategy that I just laid out has been endorsed by the "quartet" and many other members of the international community. It is as clear to us now as ever that progress must be made on all of these three tracks concurrently if there is to be hope for a truly lasting peace. That peace must include two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders.

At what can hopefully become a turning point in this conflict, all the members of the Council and indeed the entire international community must look for constructive things to do and say that will help the parties get back on the path that ends in a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. That is our goal.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you Sir, and sisterly Syria on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish you every success in discharging the task with which you have been

entrusted. We have every confidence in your ability to fulfil your responsibilities.

I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Singapore, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, for his efforts as President of the Council during the month of May.

Since 29 March this year, the Israeli military operations in the territories of the Palestinian National Authority have continued without interruption, despite the numerous Security Council resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press calling on Israel to withdraw immediately from the cities, villages and areas it has recently reoccupied. The Israeli Government continues to refuse to implement those resolutions, opposing the will of the Council on various pretexts and continuing its siege of the Palestinian people and their legitimate and democratically elected leadership.

Moreover, the Security Council has demonstrated its inability to react to the situation and to pressure Israel to implement its obligations under those resolutions. This unique situation in the Security Council has thus encouraged Israel to continue its acts of violence and destruction, its dismantling of the Palestinian National Authority and its targeting and terrorizing of Palestinian civilians — actions that are intended to achieve strategic goals and create new facts on the ground leading to the abrogation of the legitimate Palestinian right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The recent developments — and any acceptance of the policies and situation on the ground that the Israeli Government is trying to establish — represent a dangerous setback for the prospects of peace in the region. In this context, the op-ed piece by the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Sharon, in *The New York Times*, offered a twisted legal interpretation of Council resolution 242 (1967). In writing such an opinion, Prime Minister Sharon seemed to have forgotten that resolution 242 (1967) and subsequent relevant resolutions of the Council all emphasized the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and declared the territories seized by Israel in June 1967 to be occupied territories. Such statements, which are encouraged by the silence of the international community and the inability of the Security Council to react, are destroying the key pillar of the Middle East peace process: the principle of land for peace. They also represent a flat-out rejection of the peace initiative adopted at the recent Arab Summit held in Beirut.

The resumption of the peace process, together with Israel's implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and its respect for the legitimate Palestinian leadership and willingness to work with it, would be guarantees of peace and security for Israel. Such guarantees can never be achieved through a war of aggression or by committing war crimes against Palestinian civilians, including attempts to forcefully transfer the population outside the occupied territories by intensifying the military and economic blockade there. Furthermore, suicide bombings cannot be combated by destroying the security apparatus of the Palestinian National Authority.

In this regard, the Government of Jordan, which condemns the suicide bombings committed in Israel against Israeli civilians, would like to draw the attention of the Israeli Government to the fact that its military operations against the Palestinians and their leadership have failed to end the bombings. Thus, it should explore the option of ending its military operations and returning to the negotiating table in order to put an end to the suicide bombings.

In conclusion, the Government of Jordan calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities with regard to Israel's refusal to fulfil its obligations under the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, it encourages the "quartet" to take effective measures against the imposition of a fait accompli, which would write off the peace process in the region. As a first step, those who are actively involved in the peace process should establish a timetable for the creation of a Palestinian State on the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I should like at the outset to express my great pleasure at seeing you, Sir, the representative of the sisterly country Syria, presiding over the Security Council this month. It is a responsibility with which the international community has entrusted Syria in appreciation of its efforts and its continual quest for international peace and security.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of Singapore, and his delegation, for the way in which Singapore presided over the Council last month.

I apologize for the fact that I do not have a written statement. I should like simply to make several brief comments.

In the past few months, we have attended many Security Council meetings dealing with the same question, but nothing ever changes. There is merely a further insistence by Israel on violating the decisions of international legitimacy, further oppression of the Palestinian people, continued siege of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, and an ongoing policy of occupation of Palestinian land.

Indeed, the only variable is that every day we hear of new acts of aggression perpetrated by Israel.

The constant is the crisis in international conscience as the world witnesses the injustice meted out to the occupied Palestinian people at the hands of an occupying Power, recognized as such by the entire international community. The world stands idly by and watches the oppression of a people, its women and children, without raising a finger. That represents a true crisis of conscience.

Another constant referred to by many speakers is the Security Council's utter inability to assume its responsibilities vis-à-vis this issue and to stand up to Israeli arrogance, rejection of international resolutions and contempt for the international community. This attitude began with the adoption of a resolution by the Security Council over 35 years ago. Resolution 242 (1967) remains a dead letter. After 35 years, the international community is still unable to ensure the implementation of one of its resolutions on the Middle East while a country is under siege. I shall not even address all the other resolutions adopted subsequently, such as resolutions 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002) and 1405 (2002). Perhaps we shall reach the magic number of 5000 at some point. That is another constant — the first being the crisis of conscience and the second the Security Council's inability to act.

What is sad is that we speak of an occupying Power's "right of self-defence". From the very outset, the issue has been one of occupation and the usurpation of a people's rights. How can one speak of the right of self-defence against a people whose land is occupied, whose rights are suppressed and whose daily life is oppressed? We remind the Israeli Government and those who choose to encourage it that siege, daily killings and the military option will never obtain the peace that Israel desires.

Israel has made the existence of the Palestinian people a living hell. Death might be preferable. Does Israel expect security from such injustice? Security comes only with justice, peace and a peaceful settlement. It will not be obtained through ongoing injustice, which generates only more violence and hatred on both sides. Innocent blood has been shed on both sides. Responsibility lies at the feet of the Israeli Government, the occupying, usurping Power that continues to displace, kill and strangle Palestinian people.

Despite our disappointment at the Council's idleness and inability to act, we continue to come and to make our statements in order to place that impotence on record. The time has come for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace. It must let the world know that no country is above the law. That alone will obtain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia; Cyprus, Malta and Turkey; and Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

In the face of continued violence in the Middle East, it is essential to redouble efforts to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive political solution to this conflict. It is clear that this highly volatile situation will not be resolved via the current mindset in which the leaders of both parties are now locked. Violence only breeds more violence. Peace and security will be achieved only through negotiations that should start as soon as possible.

The "quartet" of special envoys is meeting tomorrow, Friday, in Washington, D.C., and days later at the highest level at the margins of the G-8 summit in Canada. As a member of the "quartet", the European Union is currently working towards the soonest possible convening of an international peace conference involving not only the parties, but the international and regional players, and aimed at achieving concrete results on the political, security and economic aspects with a well-defined timetable, providing a credible political perspective and a definitive settlement of the conflict. In particular, an immediate resumption of political negotiations and of cooperation in security matters will be essential, along with the reconstruction of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, restoring its governance. International support for reconstruction and reform, a negotiating and international follow-up mechanism and the establishment of a mechanism to observe and monitor the situation on the ground are equally essential.

We reiterate the shared vision and final goal of the international community of two States in the region — a democratic, viable and independent Palestine living side by side with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders. The political roadmap is clear and based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the principles of Madrid and Oslo and subsequent agreements between the parties, as well as on the Arab League peace initiative.

We are convinced that a full and immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002)and 1403 (2002) — in particular, an immediate cessation of violence, a meaningful ceasefire and the definitive withdrawal of Israeli troops from all areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority — are essential. We deeply regret that these and other Security Council resolutions on this issue continue to be utterly ignored or selectively interpreted and partially implemented.

As it has done for other criminal acts perpetrated in the past, the European Union condemns the latest terror attacks in Israel in the strongest possible terms. Suicide attacks against and killings of Israeli civilians have continued. These acts are morally repugnant, contrary to international law and extremely harmful to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. We welcome the fact that President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have repeatedly rejected and condemned these terror attacks. We urge them both, as legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, to make every possible effort to prevent such acts, disrupt all terrorist networks and undertake more determined action against terrorism. We underline the need to bring the perpetrators of these criminal acts to justice.

Israeli forces are moving freely throughout Palestinian-controlled territory, attacking towns and arresting and killing suspected militants. Palestinian cities are besieged and sealed off by the Israeli military forces. The West Bank is divided into several separate and disconnected population centres. There seems to be no distinction between area A and area B. That is totally unacceptable and constitutes a flagrant violation of the Oslo Accords and subsequent agreements between the parties. Israel has a legitimate right to fight terrorism, but not at the expense of international law by imposing collective punishment on 3.5 million Palestinians, who are imprisoned in their own cities and towns.

Israel must immediately cease these activities and allow the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its security commitments and to halt the rapid deterioration of the Palestinian economy. We view with great concern the closures established by the Israeli Authorities — which create separated zones around the major cities in the West Bank, cutting them off from one another — as well as other measures to tighten further existing restrictions on the movement of people and goods. We call upon Israel to renounce such measures. Furthermore, the expansion of settlements proceeds unabated as does the destruction of Palestinian land and private property. The Palestinian population living in the Gaza Strip is facing a similar situation. The European Union considers that all the settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace.

The unbearable military pressure on Palestinian society only aggravates the feelings of frustration, hopelessness and hatred while failing to achieve long-term security for Israel. The current restrictions have already had a devastating effect on the living conditions of the Palestinians. Additional measures will further deteriorate the economy, ruining the Palestinian private sector and seriously hindering any implementation of reforms.

Israeli military operations since 29 March have also severely damaged and seriously disrupted the

work of the Palestinian civil administration. As well, Palestinian security organs and their infrastructure have suffered considerable damage, including the death or detention of personnel. This virtual paralysis of Palestinian security in the West Bank has created an unpredictable and even more fragmented political environment in the West Bank, posing an even greater security risk for Israel. The European Union is also concerned by reports of unexploded ordnance and explosive devices left behind after the military campaign and by the risks they hold for the civilian population.

There is broad consensus on the urgent need to re-organize the Palestinian security services in a more effective and coherent manner. The European Union welcomes and encourages the discussions under way on political, security and financial reforms in the Palestinian Authority. We welcome the new Palestinian Government and the announcement of elections by Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Legislative Council. In this regard, we call on Israel to foster an environment conducive to reform, in particular by easing restrictions on the movement of people and goods. Ending the violence and the military occupation will create a climate better suited to organizing and holding democratic, fair and transparent elections in the territories. However, we consider completely counterproductive and unrealistic any attempt to make the reform of Palestinian institutions a precondition for resuming political negotiations.

We reiterate our concern at the tragic humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories exacerbated by the continuing restrictions imposed by Israel on the freedom of movement of humanitarian organizations. International agencies and organizations continue to be subjected to a series of restrictions on the movement of their personnel, vehicles and supplies. We note with concern efforts to impose restrictions on the freedom of movement of diplomatic and consular representatives by means of security checks. We consider such practices to be a violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Any effort to assist the Palestinians with reconstruction and reform or with elections will require the full and committed cooperation of Israel, in particular by providing guarantees that the results of the reconstruction efforts will not be damaged or destroyed again. In that regard, the European Union reserves the right to claim reparations in the appropriate forums.

The European Union affirms its intention to preserve, strengthen and assist the Palestinian Authority through efforts to rebuild its infrastructure and its security and governance capacity, while supporting reforms and the creation of democratic institutions.

Mr. Boubacar Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Before addressing the subject that brings us here today, allow me, Mr. President, to thank the Permanent Representative of Senegal for his warm congratulations, his words of praise and his wishes for success addressed to His Excellency Mr. François Fall, who was recently promoted to the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Guinea. I would like to assure him that his brotherly message will be fully and faithfully passed on.

After a brief period of calm, which gave us a glimmer of hope, the Middle East region has unfortunately sunk once again into the habitual cycle of violence that we have known for so long.

In recent days, we have witnessed, on the one hand, a resumption of suicide bombing attacks on Israeli targets and, on the other, the forcible reoccupation of Palestinian cities. This phenomenon, driven by the reciprocal desire for revenge, is undoubtedly a sign of a resurgence of the old demons of hatred and misunderstanding.

Faced with this new escalation, the Security Council, the guardian of peace, must urgently assume its rightful responsibilities in order to prevent a deadly war and, beyond that, a destabilization of the region.

This is the time to stress the need for the international community to give greater consideration to what it must do to cause the Israeli and Palestinian parties to exercise more restraint and to make them understand, once and for all, that peace cannot take root in the soil of suspicion and resentment.

The parties, rather than holding tenaciously to rigid and intransigent positions, should envisage their relations from a broad, political viewpoint combining the desire for security and the right to existence. Therefore, beyond the need to implement Council resolutions, and distancing ourselves from the customary rhetoric, it is up to us to explore together new, bolder, consensual ways to remove the Israeli and

Palestinian peoples from the storm in which they have been immersed for decades.

In this context, my delegation welcomes and encourages the efforts of the "quartet", of the G-8 and of other influential actors of the international community to bring the protagonists to reason and thus to create a peaceful climate favourable to the resumption of negotiations — the only way to a fair and lasting peace.

We are convinced that those efforts, combined with a regional dynamic in which all concerned parties without exception should participate, would ease tensions, rekindle the flame of hope and create a space of understanding and harmony benefiting the Middle East as a whole.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I can be brief, not least because the representative of Spain has just made a statement on behalf of the members of the European Union.

Like everyone who has spoken today, the United Kingdom remains very concerned about the situation in the region. It is imperative that we break the cycle of violence. Both sides have their contribution to make to that end. Both parties must implement recent United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the provisions for ceasefire and withdrawal, and resume the negotiations based on the Council's vision of a two-State solution set out in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002).

The international focus now should be on renewal of a political process leading to a comprehensive settlement. We support the idea of an international conference covering security, economic and political issues in parallel.

The United Kingdom remains actively engaged. In recent days, Prime Minister Blair has met President Mubarak, United States Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Prime Minister Sharon and he has spoken with King Abdullah. Mr. Blair will meet Prime Minister Hariri next week.

Both parties have responsibilities. The Palestinian Authority must do more to prevent terrorist attacks. Reforms of the Palestinian Authority's security, economic and administrative sectors are essential. We welcome the Palestinian Authority Cabinet reshuffle on 10 June as the beginning of this process. We hope the new Cabinet will be able to get down to work quickly.

But, progress on reform and security cannot be sustained without giving Palestinians real hope for a political process leading to a settlement that addresses their legitimate aspirations, both political and economic. Israeli cantonization of the West Bank feeds despair, poverty and extremism, and undermines the Palestinian Authority's security infrastructure. Settlement growth, for example, new construction in Jebel Mukabar and the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim strengthens the hand of those who argue that the Israeli Government is not seriously committed to land for peace. We welcome yesterday's Israeli withdrawal from Ramallah, but such incursions are counterproductive and must end.

There is broad consensus in the Council on the shape of a final settlement. Currently, many diplomatic efforts, including tomorrow's "quartet" meeting in Washington, are under way with the aim of achieving such an outcome. A key priority now must be to preserve Council unity so that the Council can play an effective role in helping to make a settlement happen.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the State of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Council for this month, especially as you represent the fraternal country Syria, with which we have close ties. We are fully confident that the outstanding efforts you and your delegation have made during your presidency of the Council will be successful because of your wisdom and efficiency. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the representative of Singapore, for the wise manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

It is very unfortunate that repeated violations of international humanitarian law and inhumane acts continue to be carried out by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, despite international efforts made during a very dangerous period in the Middle East under very difficult and serious international conditions.

Kuwait strongly condemns the arbitrary Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership, including the reoccupation by Israeli forces last week of some Palestinian towns, particularly Ramallah, the

perpetration of terrible, violent acts that have included striking the presidential headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, as well as terrifying civilians and laying siege to them.

What is perhaps dangerous and must be confronted is the fact that the Israeli Government has been applying measures it applied before 1993 to lay siege to the Palestinian territory and subject it to the Israeli civilian administration. That has given the clear message to the international community that Israel is not committed to any agreement it previously signed with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process, including the Oslo agreement. That is a very frustrating matter and is an obvious retreat from the peace option that the Arab countries and the international community have chosen.

Perhaps what Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stated in a *New York Times* op-ed article a few days ago, namely that he would not withdraw to the 1967 borders, that there would not be a settlement on Jerusalem now and that the only option for reaching a settlement now is a long-term temporary agreement, will delay reaching a final settlement. This is a very dangerous situation that leads to continued violence, the deterioration of the security situation and the suffering of the Palestinian people, who are living under difficult economic conditions. They need now, more than ever, the support of the international community to rebuild what has been destroyed by the Israeli military apparatus.

Kuwait renews its call to the Security Council to assume its responsibilities, condemn Israeli behaviour and take practical steps quickly to ensure that it implements its resolutions, particularly the recently adopted resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002) and 1405 (2002) and work to ensure that the Israeli Government respects all the agreements it has signed with the Palestinian Authority.

Under these conditions, my country welcomes all the diplomatic efforts made to restore confidence and put an end to violence. We support the Secretary-General in this regard. We call on the Council to seriously consider the Secretary-General's proposal to send a multinational force to protect the Palestinian people, to work to diminish tensions, and to create a climate conducive to a return to negotiations.

In this context, we also wish to welcome the efforts made by the Arab countries, particularly those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to coordinate with influential international parties, particularly the United States and the "quartet", in order to find a formula that satisfies all concerns of the parties involved in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of implementing resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. These are the terms of reference for bringing about a peace settlement. In this context, Kuwait also supports all the efforts being made to convene a peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned.

In conclusion, Kuwait reaffirms that it is important that the Council pursue this question to reach a final settlement ending the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese territories. Establishing a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital is the only means to peace, security and stability for all. Unless there is an end to the Israeli occupation, which is the core of the conflict and the source of instability in the region, no country will have security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haneda (Japan): The Government of Japan is deeply concerned that the situation on the ground has further deteriorated, owing to the continued terrorist suicide bombings by Palestinian extremists and the incursions by the Israeli forces into the Palestinian autonomous territories, particularly the siege of Chairman Arafat's headquarters.

Under those circumstances, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, visited Israel and the Palestinian territories on 8 and 9 June and once again called upon the leaders of both sides to stop the violence. The Foreign Minister also pointed out the importance of pursuing concurrently the three processes of restoring security, providing humanitarian and reconstruction support, and resuming and accelerating the political process. She also conveyed to them that, as a part of the political process, an international conference should be convened at an early stage, with a view to breaking the deadlock, and that

the Government of Japan, for its part, is prepared to play a role to help make the conference productive. In response, the leaders of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority pointed out the importance of the Government of Japan's involvement.

In order to advance the peace process, it is important to defuse the deep mistrust between the parties. To that end, it is essential for the international community to lend its support. The Government of Japan is ready to provide assistance to the Palestinians in response to progress in the peace process, including assistance for the reform of the Palestinian Authority, which is now under way. In addition, for the purpose of confidence-building between the parties, the Japanese Government is prepared to provide a venue where a broad range of Israelis and Palestinians would be able to discuss ways of peaceful coexistence and the vision of a future Palestinian State.

Experience to date shows that the active role of the Government of the United States provides an essential catalyst for peace in the Middle East, and the Government of Japan welcomes and supports the United States Government's efforts for peace. However, what is most important is that the parties to this conflict exert the utmost self-restraint and take the necessary political decisions. With that in mind, I would like to conclude my statement by once again calling upon the leaders of the Government of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority to make every possible effort to resume their dialogue.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to express to you, Sir, our satisfaction at seeing you assume the presidency of the Security Council this month. Our satisfaction is twofold, as you represent a country united to Cuba by profound ties of friendship.

The convening of this session was fully justified. Despite international condemnation and the resolutions that have been adopted, this week Israeli tanks once again surrounded the Palestinian National Authority's facilities in Ramallah. Ironically, that occurred as President Bush was having a meeting with Prime Minister Sharon in Washington for the sixth time, whose unusual and sole outcome was to reiterate demands for practical actions by the Palestinian Authority's leader. Shortly before that, Bush had stunned the world by calling Sharon a man of peace amid the atrocities of Jenin. Since Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, approximately 2,000 persons have died, nearly 1,500 of them innocent Palestinian civilians.

The Government of Israel's attitude of open defiance to the norms of international law and to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is, in large measure, the result of the impassivity with which the Security Council has contemplated the flagrant violations of its own resolutions. We all know why a different standard is applied in the case of Israel. That is what happens when a permanent member of the Security Council, pursuing its national interests, uses its powers and prerogatives arbitrarily. Hypocrisy and a double standard continue to prevail, assisted by the anachronistic and anti-democratic privilege of the veto. On 24 occasions, the United States has already vetoed Council draft resolutions concerning the question of Palestine. This organ could not even react timidly to the Sharon Government's decision not to cooperate with the investigative team that was to have been sent to Jenin, thereby failing to comply with resolution 1405 (2002).

Cuba commends the position maintained by those Council members who have undertaken sincere efforts to make the Council rise to the level of events. In addition, we should like to recognize the importance, as an effective contribution, of the visit to President Arafat at the Palestinian National Authority's headquarters in Ramallah by a Non-Aligned Movement group of ministers, headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

A just and lasting peace cannot be achieved in the Middle East until the Palestinian people can exercise its legitimate right to establish an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem, until all the occupied Arab territories are returned and until Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip, from the West Bank and from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. There will be no lasting peace until the Israeli provocations in Southern Lebanon cease, until the return of the Palestinians is assured and until Israeli settlements are eliminated, in conformity with Council resolution 465 (1980). There will not be a just and effective peace if Israel does not renounce its policy of occupation and

does not comply with the many resolutions adopted by the Council and by the General Assembly.

The Security Council should seriously consider the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a multinational force in the occupied territories. It is simply unacceptable that this body continues to turn its back on the Palestinian people's sufferings by trying to make us believe that nothing can be done or by adopting timid resolutions that say little and are complied with even less.

Cuba appeals once again to the Security Council to act without further delay, to rise to the occasion and to discharge its responsibilities as it should.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Mexican delegation, too, would like to express its profound concern not only at the continuing grave deterioration of the situation in the field but also at the dimming of prospects for an early, peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Mexico would like to convey to the people of Israel its concern and express its sorrow for the Israeli victims who have been killed or traumatized by the merciless armed attacks that have been carried out in recent weeks, in an atrocious manner, by suicidal Palestinian extremists.

Mexico believes in the just cause of the Palestinian people, in the rightness of its claim to a Palestinian national State and in its justified rejection of Israel's occupation of the territories where, according to Security Council resolutions, such a Palestinian State is to be established. That occupation is the root cause of the violence in the region.

Nevertheless, my delegation does not believe that it is through violent means, much less through suicide bombings — which are unacceptable from any perspective — that the Palestinian cause will prevail. The suicidal terrorist attacks that have occurred recently in Israel — attacks that horrify us all — demonstrate something that both parties should recognize by now and accept: that terrorism one the one hand and violent, offensive and disproportionate retaliation on the other are two sides of the same coin — the currency of injustice and hatred.

The continuation of suicide attacks shows that the attacks carried out by Israel as retaliation — acts which Israel considers to be a legitimate response to acts of terrorism — are ineffective and unwise and run counter to Israel's own security interests. Israel has every right to enjoy secure borders, but it must come to realize that if it uses these means, it will not win its war against terrorism. It is setting fire to its own house.

What is happening in Palestine and Israel is a tragedy, and, unfortunately, none of the efforts of the international community, none of the resolutions of the Security Council and none of the diplomatic representations that have been made have been able to end the violence and set the peace process back on track. However, Mexico reiterates its intention to intensify mediation initiatives to try to achieve a political agreement that would lead to the resumption of a peace process based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and on the agreements emanating from Madrid and Oslo.

In this connection, Mexico believes that mediation efforts should be carried out through concrete and clear-cut activities that do not give rise to any doubts or hesitancy. My country therefore urges the "quartet" to play an even more active role in order to unblock the situation on the ground and to create favourable conditions that might in the short term lead to the resumption of a genuine peace process and to the establishment of a Palestinian State that would coexist peacefully, within secure borders, with Israel.

A very long road has already been traveled, at great expense and effort, and has produced many useful proposals and agreements, which must not be cast aside. This is not a time to turn back with proposals that could be dangerous and revive distrust and violence.

The Security Council must not only demand compliance with its resolutions, but it must also, as the representative of Mauritius has pointed out, study the substance of the situation in the field and from a political perspective, in order to devise avenues for action — not reaction — that will help to create a more favourable climate for negotiations and for an eventual just and lasting peace process. The Security Council must consider these proposals and must be prepared to craft positions that will serve for the long run.

Mexico is concerned by the tendency of the current Israeli Government to move away from the

legal standards of the international community, which had enabled us thus far to speak of the existence of a Middle East peace process based on agreements and commitments.

In practice, Israel has already abandoned the Oslo framework and has traveled a dangerous distance away from resolution 242 (1967). Nor does Israel seem to be accepting the peace offer contained in the Saudi peace plan. It has been undermining the Palestinian Authority, preventing it from being an effective interlocutor.

Over the past few months, Israel has set about systematically destroying the economic and institutional infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority in the territories, and it has consolidated the illegal settlements, which, along with the terrorist attacks, are the immediate cause, if not the root, of the prevailing violence.

My delegation shares the concern voiced here this afternoon by the European Union concerning the extremely preoccupying situation of the population in the Palestinian territories, and in particular about the stranglehold imposed by Israel on the population.

The proposal to hold an international conference on the Middle East should energetically be explored. However, at this juncture, it is hard to see how this project could come to fruition. For a just peace process to exist, the parties to a conflict must display the political will to arrive at an agreement. That will is not visible. My delegation considers that we must strengthen legitimate international mediation for the benefit of both parties, which must be done through the "quartet" formula. The Government of Mexico will not recognize as viable any peace plan imposed unilaterally that draws away from the political and legal framework contained in Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

Mexico proposes to the members of the "quartet" that they play a more active role. We would also like to suggest that they set parameters that are acceptable to the parties and that lead to the cessation of violence and the speedy establishment of a Palestinian State within the framework of the resolutions of the Security Council and the relevant agreements. Such parameters, resulting from mediation, could be taken forward to an international conference and could provide the basis for the Security Council to adopt substantive, operational and defining resolutions that go far beyond ad hoc responses of the moment. We are convinced that the Security Council can decisively support a proposal that contributes to breaking the cycle of violence and building lasting peace.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, is one of the most complex and intractable problems on the Security Council's agenda. It is therefore both appropriate and opportune for the Security Council to hold this open debate to take stock of the deteriorating situation on the ground, the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions — in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) — as well as the intensive diplomatic efforts that are ongoing to help bring the parties back to a political process. The situation demands the continued and sustained attention and engagement of the Security Council.

The current situation remains worrying, even if the events there are not grabbing the headlines on a daily basis. In fact, the lack of attention being paid by the international community is a cause of grave concern. A sense of normalcy should not be created in an extremely abnormal situation. The Palestinian people are put through daily humiliations as they move through closures and checkpoints, and often suffer casualties as a result of frequent Israeli military incursions. At the same time, we cannot but imagine the fear and horror that the Israeli population is subjected to as suicide bombings continue unabated. Singapore deplores in the strongest terms all acts of terror and the targeting of civilians. We look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's report mandated by General Assembly resolution ES-10/10 on the recent events that took place in Jenin and other Palestinian cities. Establishing the facts objectively would help the parties move forward.

Singapore believes that the best way of addressing the situation is through the implementation of existing Security Council resolutions. Non-implementation of Security Council resolutions weakens the authority of the Security Council, including its ability to ensure full compliance with its other resolutions. While the necessary political will and courage from the parties are ultimately needed to do so, it is also clear that the Security Council and other international players have a role in helping the parties implement the resolutions.

That is amply demonstrated by the diplomatic efforts that helped lift the restrictions placed on Chairman Yasser Arafat in his Ramallah compound and the siege on the Church of the Nativity by the Israel Defence Force. Similarly, international assistance is urgently needed to strengthen and reform the Palestinian Authority, in particular its security structures, to help it take action against acts of terror. We welcome current efforts to reform the Palestinian Authority, which should continue while steps are taken to advance the political process.

In that regard, we look forward to a positive outcome from the next meeting of the "quartet" in Washington, D.C., which is scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, 14 June. We hope that meeting will further the preparations for an international conference on the Middle East. Through the efforts of the Secretary-General, the quartet has truly become an important political reality and instrument. We hope that the quartet will continue to be strengthened, both as a forum to consolidate the views of a broad and influential range of international players, as well as a catalyst for peace initiatives. We pledge our full support to the role played by the Secretary-General and his envoys, who have so ably represented the United Nations and our collective voices in the quartet.

The international conference should build on existing peace agreements and understandings reached between the parties, including the negotiations at Camp David in 2000 and the subsequent discussions at Taba, as well as Arab peace initiatives. It is important that the international conference build on a framework that addresses security, peace and economic distress in parallel. Only by adopting such a comprehensive framework can the security needs of the Israel and political aspirations of the Palestinian people be addressed simultaneously.

At the end of the day, it bears repeating that there is no military solution to the conflict and that violence cannot take the place of negotiations. There will be no real improvement in the situation except by giving both the Israeli and Palestinian people hope. Public opinion in both societies is being radicalized by events on the ground. While hope remains that credible peace negotiations could swing such public opinion around, the longer it takes for a political process to take root, the more entrenched such extremist public opinion will become. It is therefore more urgent than ever to move beyond the crisis-management phase to a crisis-solving phase. We hope that the Security Council will be able to contribute to turning things around in the Middle East by speaking with one voice, a point that has also been emphasized by previous speakers.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by extending my delegation's congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of June. We are convinced that with your diplomatic skill, our deliberations will result in a positive outcome. I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, for his excellent leadership in presiding over the work of the Council last month.

Indonesia remains deeply concerned at the current situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territories. During the past few months, it has become habitual for Israel to undertake at will repeated incursions into, and to commit acts of aggression against, the occupied territories. Israel's storming of the Palestinian headquarters and its siege of it are particularly reprehensible. The fact that Israel has insisted on this abhorrent policy with impunity is a sad reflection of the Council's inability to deal with what is universally acknowledged as an intolerable situation. Backed by military might, Israel has continued its dangerous and destructive course, with utter disregard for the prospects for peace. It is therefore time to end Israel's military adventure and initiate negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

My delegation holds the view that the implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) is critical to the realization of peace in the region. Of equal importance is the implementation of resolution 1397 (2002), which sketched a road map for the realization of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. Only through the realization of that objective can we bring to an end the turmoil that is raging in the occupied territories.

Finally, my delegation deems it necessary to reiterate the responsibility of the international community, and specifically that of the Security

Council, to take the necessary steps to put an end to the illegal Israeli occupation and to protect the lives of innocent civilians. Therefore, my delegation strongly believes in the imperative need to deploy an international security force to protect civilians as a matter of urgency and to restore normalcy to these war-torn territories.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is a pleasure for me to see you, Sir, preside over the Security Council for the current month. I would also like to extend our appreciation to your predecessor, the representative of Singapore, for the splendid manner in which he guided the Council last month.

It was not very long ago that the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002) with its vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side within secure and recognized borders. It also recalled the two landmark resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), reaffirming the principle of land for peace. Resolution 1397 (2002) was adopted in the wake of the bold proposal of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and of the Beirut Declaration, which underscored the commitment of the Arab countries to peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. Together, they constituted the configuration of a peace settlement in the Middle East — an opportunity to move back from the brink of violence and destruction and to find a way out of this tragic quagmire.

What was required was the establishment of timelines for the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the fulfilment of their objectives. Unfortunately, instead of the sincere implementation of this endorsed vision of peace, the Israeli response was intransigence, accompanied by the continuing use of force and violence. Once again, the prospects for peace in the Holy Land are being crushed under the treads of Israeli tanks.

Pakistan condemns Israel's latest military incursion into Ramallah and the continuing encirclement of President Yasser Arafat's headquarters. This incursion, together with the raids into Tulkarm, Bethlehem and Jenin, have resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of property. All these Israeli actions constitute serious breaches of Israel's legal obligations and responsibilities as an occupying Power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 12 August 1949. They also violate the provisions of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002).

The goal in the Holy Land is to find a final settlement, not to impose a final solution. The people of Israel, no doubt, appreciate the distinction. Peace cannot be durable if it is imposed through the barrel of a gun. Durable peace cannot be achieved by eliminating your interlocutor or installing one of your own choice. Peace cannot come with one side literally calling the shots.

When the avenues of dialogue and negotiation are closed, the Security Council must assume its responsibilities under the Charter in order to secure the implementation of its resolutions and decisions. Israel must cease its aggression against the Palestinian people and their lawful Government.

The Security Council has agreed on the nature of the framework of peace. What is needed now is to identify the specific goals which need to be achieved to realize the agreed vision of resolution 1397 (2002), and the timelines for doing so. The Council and the international community must turn their attention to that task.

Violence begets violence. It is not the path to peace in the Middle East or elsewhere. The present deteriorating situation in Palestine warrants the urgent attention of the international community. We much act, and act with determination, to prevent the situation from descending into chaos — chaos in which neither side can realize its hopes for peace with security. The prospects for peace in the Middle East will continue to remain bleak without the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, provocation and destruction. Those with the responsibility to maintain international peace, and especially the Security Council, must therefore act. The Committee must act now to realize this objective and revive the hopes for durable peace in the region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me begin, Sir, by offering you, sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month. I am confident that you will carry out your duties in the best possible manner. I would like to express thanks to the Permanent Representative of Singapore and to the members of his delegation for their skilful leadership of the Council last month.

Since the 1948 tragedy, Iraq has been treating the question of Palestine as a top priority of its foreign and domestic policy. It is Iraq's national and regional duty to address that question in all international forums, the Security Council in particular, because the issue is not an ordinary one. It is an extraordinary issue. It is a question of colonialism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is a question of territorial usurpation and foreign occupation. Therefore, addressing this issue is not only a sacred and legitimate act of defence; it is also anchored in international law as a question of national liberation, independence and self-determination.

The Council is therefore duty-bound to accord special attention to this long-standing and serious question with a view to achieving a just solution, not only by convening public meetings and listening to the views of States — although that is, of course, of great importance — but by adopting bold and even-handed resolutions that are commensurate with the gravity of events. There must also be a follow-up mechanism to ensure that such resolutions are implemented.

We note with regret that the Council adopts a discriminatory approach in dealing with the question of Palestine despite the legitimacy of that question. We note also that the Council does not deal with the question of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in the same way as it deals with issues of a similar nature of which it is seized. In such cases it often responds in an expeditious and innovative way. Such behaviour is contrary to the provisions of the Charter — in particular the principle of equality — under which the Council operates.

Like others, we understand why the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, takes this unbalanced stance. We also understand why the United Nations and the Council pursue a policy of double standards as though such a policy were a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, in order to place on record the need for historical responsibility, we would like to draw attention to this fact. World Zionism, as represented by the Zionist entity, working in direct, well-established and declared cooperation and collaboration with the United States of America, prevents this Council and other international institutions from carrying out their functions, from taking a just and even-handed position in dealing with the most outrageous tragedy ever known to humankind and from enabling the United Nations system to fulfil its mandate as set forth in the Charter.

The Security Council's failure to deal with the question of Palestine means that the United Nations as a whole runs the risk of losing whatever credibility it might still have and underscores the fact that the United Nations has become a tool of United States and Zionist policies. For more than 10 years, any Member of this Organization that has tried to depart from the line set forth by those evil Powers has subjected itself to great risk and incalculable consequences.

Forgive me, but I truly wonder how most — I stress the word "most" — members of the Council can have a clear conscience and peace of mind when they see unfolding before them, around the clock, night and day, in the streets, in mosques and in churches, killings and other atrocities, destruction, imprisonment, acts of terrorism and gross violations of the inalienable rights of an entire people.

All of these acts are being carried out under the direct command of the Zionist Sharon Government, which squarely embodies the concept of State-sponsored terrorism. How can members of the Security Council fail to make a move, to meet, or to take a decision on the assumption that there is an alleged initiative, or a forthcoming meeting, by the masters in order to discuss the notion of a future Palestinian State? The Council understands what I mean by "masters". How can the Security Council accept this as a situation that does not warrant consultations? Perhaps the issue has become too familiar because it has been going on for so many months.

What is taking place in the Security Council is very clear, and it requires that we all stand up and say loud and clear that the situation is intolerable and unsustainable and that it must be brought to an end forthwith. The members of the Security Council must

not act on the basis of a fait accompli. Rather, they should act on the basis of their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. Otherwise, all of them will be morally, if not legally, accountable before history.

The people of Palestine and their Government, supported by all Arab States, including my country, Iraq, as well as by most other honourable States and peoples of the world, call upon the Council to stand by the side of a people subjected to the crime of genocide — a people that legitimately claims the establishment of an independent State in Palestine and its right to life and to be protected from a brutal, terrorist, colonialist Power.

It is the responsibility of the Security Council to prevent the brutal aggressor from persisting in its unjust practices and atrocities; it must not be allowed to carry out acts of terrorism against a people or to hold them hostage. The Council should work to restore to the Palestinian people their legitimate rights. Otherwise, the ship will run aground with all of us on board and will be doomed.

Having said that, I am pleased to conclude my statement on an optimistic note, since we are confident that the rights of Palestine will never be lost so long as there is a nation willing to make every possible sacrifice in defence of its national honour, freedom, life and independence and so long as honourable people remain in this world who stand at that nation's side.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself fully with the statement made by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The Israelis and Palestinians are now locked into a perverse logic. Blood continues to flow every day. Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) are still not being complied with. We are facing a catastrophic impasse that is leading the two peoples and the region towards the abyss.

In the name of its fight against terrorism, Israel is pursuing a repressive and security-based military logic that leaves no prospect for a resumption of dialogue and the humanitarian consequences of which are tragic for the Palestinian people. The actions against the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian towns — in particular the repeated incursions into zone A, the reoccupation of Ramallah, the de facto cantonization of the West Bank and the restrictions on the movement of people and goods — contravene the law and are counterproductive. They must stop forthwith. The same can be said of settlement activities, particularly in Jerusalem, and of the destruction of administrative and economic infrastructures, agricultural lands and homes. These unilateral actions only exacerbate the people's despair, hinder the implementation of the reforms desired by all and obstruct the security efforts of the Palestinian Authority. The fight against terrorism, while perfectly legitimate, must be undertaken in compliance with the law and, in particular, with international humanitarian law and Israel's international commitments. It cannot justify the collective punishment and daily humiliation of an entire people.

On the Palestinian side, certain groups and individuals are pursuing a terrorist logic that is blind, unacceptable and counterproductive. The extremists are holding the entire population hostage. France has vigorously condemned the recent attacks, which no cause can justify. These attacks have also been unconditionally condemned by the Palestinian Authority and Yasser Arafat, its elected President. The Palestinian leaders and a number of their fellow citizens are aware of the destructive impact of these attacks on the legitimate national cause of the Palestinians. Beyond such condemnations, the Palestinian Authority must use every means still at its disposal to prevent and end these attacks.

The reforms announced by the Palestinian Authority and the initial measures taken are steps in the right direction. France has welcomed the publication of the Judiciary Law and of the Basic Law, along with the establishment of a new Government, the ongoing process to rationalize and improve the security apparatus and the announcement of local and legislative elections. This effort must be pursued. It is essential that the Palestinians be able to create political, administrative, legal and security structures that will form the framework of their future State. They will be the guarantee of an effective, transparent and democratic Administration responsive to the aspirations of the Palestinian people. The international community must support these reconstruction and reform efforts, which are also in Israel's interest, which would have everything to gain by facilitating them.

The international community has the urgent duty to help the parties out of their current vicious circle. Security and humanitarian imperatives must urgently be reconciled. It is essential to resist the temptation to indulge fatalism and to resign ourselves to the worst. The worst is not ineluctable, but it will take courage and a great sense of responsibility on the part of the parties, their leaders and the international community to avoid it.

We are at a critical and paradoxical crossroads. At the international diplomatic level, we have never be so close to a consensus on the specific shape of a final solution to the conflict and a lasting peace; at the same time, its implementation on the ground seems never to have been so distant.

We agree on the objectives. The Israeli occupation of 1967 must be put to an end on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We must create an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders. Through negotiation, we must find a just solution to all pending questions related to the future Palestinian State, in particular the questions of Jerusalem and the refugees. Relations among all the countries of the region must be normalized.

Now is the time to define the roadmap that will lead us from the vision of a comprehensive, lasting and just peace to its implementation. To that end, the international conference on peace in the Middle East proposed by Colin Powell and the "quartet" could be a particularly useful instrument. We must therefore set out without delay to define its objectives, terms of reference, timetable and format precisely.

For France, the objectives are those that I have just described. The terms of reference must be built on the foundation that is now the bedrock of the international consensus: Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); the principles of the Madrid Conference, and in particular the principle of land for peace; the Oslo Accords; the achievements of past negotiations; the Saudi peace proposal endorsed by the Arab summit in Beirut and reaffirmed by the tripartite summit in Sharm el-Sheikh; and the American vision developed by President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The participants must include all parties, including Syria and Lebanon, as well as the Arab States most directly affected: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Morocco. The timetable must be realistic, but it is urgent that we move forward in a substantial way. It is indeed urgent to restore the hopes of Palestinians and Israelis through a genuine political process. The security problems cannot be treated in isolation. Their lasting solution necessarily entails political and humanitarian measures: we must revive the prospect of a viable Palestinian State and put an end to the humanitarian tragedy and to the unprecedented economic deterioration of the Palestinian territories.

The recent statements of the United States Secretary of State are encouraging and should be supported. The efforts of the United States are essential and decisive. France awaits with interest the new proposals that the American authorities announced would soon be presented. France is counting on the "quartet" and on all of its members to make rapid progress. The Security Council, whose resolutions must be implemented, must continue to make its contribution along the same lines.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Recently, the Israeli forces have made repeated incursions into the Palestinian territories and have carried out massive military operations causing huge losses of life and property among the Palestinian people. The Israeli forces have also repeatedly besieged the headquarters of Chairman Arafat, seriously threatening his personal safety. The acts of the Israelis violate the relevant Security Council resolutions. We oppose and condemn such acts. Recently, a series of suicide bombing incidents have taken place, causing a large number of casualties among innocent civilians. We also express our condemnations of that.

Recent developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have shown that the efforts of the international community to stop the escalation of violence cannot be eased for even one instant. The settling of the Israeli-Palestinian question must be linked to the comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. The relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace must be implemented in earnest, especially resolution 1397 (2002), adopted by the Council last March. It needs to be emphasized that the State of Palestine should be created at an early date. The Israeli side must immediately withdraw its troops from the Palestinian

territories it occupies. The authority and personal safety of Chairman Arafat must be ensured.

Meanwhile, it must be pointed out that violent suicide attacks against civilians must be stopped. The evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also demonstrated that it is now difficult to break the deadlock by relying solely on the parties to the conflict. The easing of tension requires the involvement and assistance of third parties. In this regard, the Security Council should assume the responsibilities bestowed upon it by the Charter.

China will work continuously with all parties in the international community and make unremitting efforts for the political settlement of the Middle East question. A Deputy Foreign Minister of China will visit Palestine and Israel in the coming days.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month and thank you for convening this meeting on the Palestinian question, which continues to be the focus of attention of the international community.

The repression of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories continues unabated. The recent siege of the West Bank city of Ramallah, which lasted three days, was the latest example of the continued repressive and bloody campaign pursued by the occupying power. During the siege, invading troops kept inhabitants under curfew and entrapped them in their homes. They turned some areas of the city into piles of rubble and damaged further the headquarters of Mr. Arafat, which had been damaged earlier during the five-week siege in March and April.

The retreat of Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles does not signal an end to aggression against Ramallah. They are taking up positions outside the city and keeping it encircled and under the constant threat of repeated invasion. This has been the case all along in most other cities and villages across the occupied territories.

The latest Israeli aggression was timed to coincide with the visit of head of the Israeli regime to Washington. What is more disappointing and alarming is the almost unqualified endorsement he received there for criminal assaults launched repeatedly by the occupying army against civilian areas under foreign occupation, which flagrantly violate the norms and principles of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. No doubt such endorsement plays an important role in emboldening the aggressor, thereby further endangering the lives of innocent Palestinian civilians and dashing hopes for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The clampdown on the movements of Palestinians within and outside the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which continues steadily, figures among the numerous criminal acts against the Palestinian people. Because of this act by the Israeli troops, so many Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank have become isolated enclaves surrounded by troops and tanks. The Gaza Strip, with 1.3 million inhabitants, has been effectively cut in half and sometimes into thirds by checkpoints set up to protect Gaza's approximately 7,000 Jewish settlers. Such a criminal practice is being employed to humiliate and to punish collectively an entire population. It is constantly adding to the desperation felt in the Palestinian territories and is feeding the Middle East conflict day by day.

We share with the rest of the world the conviction that the occupation of the Arab lands, be they Palestinian, Syrian or Lebanese, by the Israelis lies at the heart of the crisis and conflict in the Middle East. We regret that the Security Council has not yet discharged its Charter responsibility with regard to the Palestinian question despite so many appeals to the Council over so many years.

We regret the Council's failure to take firm action under the Chapter VII of the Charter to stop the Israelis' continual flouting of its resolutions. It is quite unfortunate and disappointing that the Israelis blocked an official inquiry into the war crimes that its troop committed in the Jenin refugee camp and elsewhere in the West Bank in April and that the Council could not enforce the resolution it passed in this respect. Moreover, the Council's failure to uphold its resolution on the Palestinian question is another example of the double standards that paralyse it and affect its credibility.

In the meantime, we look forward to the report on war crimes in Jenin by the Secretary-General, as requested by the emergency special session of the

General Assembly, and we hope that those whose influence prevented the Council from taking action with regard to Jenin will not be allowed to tamper with the efforts of the Secretary-General to present an objective and frank report.

In the light of what happened recently in the occupied territories, we believe that the United Nations must use all the necessary means to force Israel to comply with the demands of the world community. The Security Council should take effective measures with a view to stopping Israeli aggression completely. With that objective in mind, the establishment of an international protection force under Chapter VII of the Charter, to be deployed in the occupied territories and mandated to protect civilians from atrocities committed by Israeli troops, is now all the more necessary. It is also essential that those who ordered and actually committed war crimes against civilians in the occupied territories be brought to justice.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on Syria's assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am fully confident that, with your vast experience and wisdom, the Council's work will be successful. I also wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and the members of his delegation for Singapore's outstanding presidency of the Council last month.

The twentieth century witnessed a large-scale decolonization movement, in which the United Nations contributed to ending colonialism in many parts of the world — with the exception of one brutal colonization that is based on a military and political ideology that holds that peace alone will not guarantee Israel domination and hegemony over its Arab neighbours or control of the situation in the Middle East.

It is often stated that the Palestinian question is difficult and complicated, but it is in fact very clear. It is a question of colonization, the usurpation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the seizure of its territory and expansion onto Arab territory. It is a matter of the just demand of the Palestinian people to gain freedom, independence and legitimate rights, as all other peoples liberated from colonialism have done.

The world has been following the suffering of the Palestinian people and the unjust and coercive practices that violate religious values and contravene international norms and moral principles. That has led to frustration in efforts to bring about peace, security and justice. Wisdom and rationality had to prevail, and this gave rise to the Saudi peace initiative, which is based on international legitimacy, which affirms Arab rights and which calls for an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967 and for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, in order to bring security, peace and stability to all the peoples and States of the region. That initiative has received unprecedented international acceptance and was adopted by all Arab States at the Arab Summit in Lebanon.

While Arab leaders continue their efforts and contacts, in keeping with the Arab peace initiative, Israel continues its deliberate destructive policies in the Palestinian territories and its arbitrary and inhumane practices, committing war crimes for which it could be tried under international agreements. Israel is reoccupying parts of the Palestinian territory and is imposing a military siege against it. As soon as it withdraws from one region, it enters another, sowing terror and horror in the hearts of civilians, who are deprived of their most basic human rights, and increasing the suffering and pain of the Palestinian people.

A few days ago the Israeli Prime Minister affirmed in an article published in *The New York Times* what we have long been saying: that he has no plan for peace. Yet, he has plans that reject the establishment of a Palestinian entity on the land of historic Palestine; he continues to work to strangle the spirit of Palestinian steadfastness, he extinguishes the torch of Palestinian resistance and he destroys everything the Palestinian Authority has built in terms of basic infrastructure for the Palestinian State.

That is being done to stop the growth of the elements of an independent economic and political Palestinian community, to impose forced migration on the largest possible number of Palestinians through the

implementation of a transfer plan, to restrict the remaining Palestinians in compliant groups, living in isolated bantustans besieged by military settlements and military bases, and to isolate and restrict them by means of racial laws and apartheid.

The Israeli Prime Minister's article, in which he invented a strange interpretation of resolution 242 (1967), reflects the absolute rejection by the present Israeli Government of the search for a final solution, because that would put an end to its expansionist ambitions.

The United Nations has shown no great interest in Israel's persistent aggression, its contempt for international legitimacy or its failure to implement the numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the more recent resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002), and 1405 (2002). The fact that the United Nations and the international community have ignored Israel's failure to implement resolutions of international legitimacy is why conflict and instability in the Middle East continue.

The Arabs have chosen the strategic option of peacefully addressing and resolving the Middle East question through negotiations and of reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive political resolution of the problem.

We express our appreciation for the efforts of the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the Secretary-General, and we hope that their contribution will help put an end to the humanitarian tragedy of the Palestinians and to Israel's brutal occupation, since 1967, of Arab lands, including Al-Quds, so that violence will end, security will return, fear will vanish, peace will prevail, destruction will end and prosperity will be restored.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We wish you every success in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. Thus, I shall be brief, as I prefer to highlight only a few points already addressed in the European Union statement.

Turkey has been unequivocal in its condemnation of all forms of terrorism and adamant in its belief that terrorism cannot be construed, let alone understood, as a potent tool in the pursuit of political ends. Although we note the decrease in the number of suicide bombings, we once again join those who strongly condemn the latest spate of terrorist attacks in Israel. Violence and terrorism cannot and will not yield results. Only a negotiated settlement of this conflict that will also lead to the creation of a democratic, viable and independent State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel within mutually recognized and secure borders, can bring peace and security to the region. Likewise, full and non-selective implementation of Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) is a prerequisite for embarking upon a serious and results-seeking negotiating process.

To be precise, both parties should understand — and should convince the international community that they realize — that there is no alternative to a peaceful negotiating process for completely solving the Middle East conflict by attaining a just, lasting and comprehensive solution. Coercion and terrorism — neither of those treacherous twins is capable of producing the desired results. I am referring to results that would benefit the long-term and true interests of the parties and that would reflect the aspirations of present and future generations, if only they knew how to intervene or had the power to do so as today's events unfold.

We therefore call upon the interested parties once more to embark upon serious negotiations, for which Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), along with the Madrid and Oslo principles and the subsequent agreements reached between the parties, constitute the framework. We heartily support the efforts of the "quartet" and other initiatives aimed at helping the parties towards the noble end of a negotiated peaceful settlement. In that context, we welcome the formation of a new Palestinian Cabinet and hope that it is the harbinger of

new vistas of reform. The mutually strengthening pillars of transparency and the principles of good governance should guide the reform efforts.

Today, after months of tragic events, we have reason to hope that addressing the situation in the Middle East in a serious and constructive manner will lead to the restoration of peace and to a genuine political process. Turkey is always ready to continue to play its role towards that end. We strongly believe that, once the conditions are right, the city of Istanbul will offer a venue where every interested party would feel at home and at ease to work for a future of long-overdue peace and stability in the region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On previous occasions, we have said that neither Israel's security concerns nor the political aspirations of the Palestinians can be fulfilled through violence. The military operation unleashed by Israel, in which it has reoccupied the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority, has not been able to stop terrorist attacks in Israeli territory. Moreover, those attacks, which have provoked the violent Israeli reaction, have contributed to the erosion of the Palestinian Authority, which is the institutional basis of a future Palestinian State.

I should like to say very clearly that Colombia rejects the terrorist attacks carried out by extremists on Israeli territory, which are causing deaths and injuries among the civilian population. In that regard, we should like to express our sympathy to the families of those who have fallen victim to such attacks. At the same time, we reject Israel's excessive use of force and its reoccupation of territories that had been under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Israel's actions are causing destruction and death among the Palestinian population, to whom we also express our sympathy at this time of suffering. I should like to reiterate our appeal to all the parties to bear in mind the security of the civilian population as well as the need to respect the norms of international humanitarian law.

Resolution 1402 (2002) called upon both parties immediately to implement a true ceasefire. Regrettably, that has not been complied with. The resolution also called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. Regrettably, Israeli forces continue carrying out almost daily incursions into various Palestinian cities and have imposed a system of controls that has had the effect of virtually isolating Palestinian cities. Ramallah remains under continuing occupation, and the headquarters of President Arafat have been attacked once again and remain under siege.

All of these actions are cause for humiliation among the people of Palestinian. They provide arguments to the partisans of violence and incite them to continue their actions. It is also clear that the resolutions of the Security Council have not been complied with.

The efforts of the Security Council and those of other actors have been designed, on the one hand, to stop the violence and the terror, and, on the other, to start to create conditions for the parties to return to the negotiating table. My delegation still cannot understand why the Israeli Government did not cooperate with the fact-finding team called for by resolution 1405 (2002), and, in this respect, we await with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the events in Jenin, in keeping with the request of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

In recent months, the Security Council had managed to achieve an important consensus on the situation in the Middle East. That consensus was not easy to achieve, and, as non-permanent members of the Council, we had actively worked to achieve it. However, non-compliance with the Council's decisions compromises its authority and its credibility.

Next Friday there will be a meeting in Washington of the members of the "quartet". We continue to support the group's work and its diplomatic efforts in the search for a just and lasting solution, and we trust that the international conference will become a reality in the near future.

It is necessary to act simultaneously in three areas: security, humanitarian activities and economic rehabilitation, and the political process. A partial solution to only one of these aspects that does not take the other two into account cannot produce a lasting solution.

We would like also to state once again that the Arab Summit's peace proposal represents an opportunity that should be given due consideration, along with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967),

338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The situation in the Middle East, and particularly in Palestine — the reason why we are meeting here once again — remains serious and tragic and continues to challenge us. My delegation shares the concerns expressed by all of those who spoke earlier.

The suicide bombings have resumed following a brief respite. Hardly a day goes by without another attack here or there. On the other hand, the police operations carried out by Israel are becoming increasingly systematic. We deplore the deaths that have occurred on both sides; this kind of routinization is unacceptable to the human conscience.

The fragile achievements registered by the peace process have been seriously undermined. The structures of the Palestinian Authority, put in place with great effort, have been reduced to almost nothing, because those responsible have either disappeared or have been arrested.

The head of the Authority has been disempowered by the other side, which has taken away his capacity to act. The socio-economic infrastructures has been damaged or destroyed. The Palestinian people are helpless. The Israeli people are deeply concerned, and their daily existence is overshadowed by the attacks.

But where have all the peace initiatives gone? What has come of all of the United Nations resolutions calling for the settlement of this crisis? Formal peace plans have been proposed, and new ideas, not yet in the form of a plan, have also been suggested. But what are their chances of success?

First of all, the Abdullah plan; as the Council is well aware, that plan is based on the land-for-peace formula. Endorsed by the Beirut Summit in March, the plan proposed that Israel withdraw to the lines of 4 June 1967; that Syria recover the Golan Heights; and that a Palestinian State be created in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem. In exchange, the 22 States of the Arab League would establish full diplomatic and trade relations with Israel, whose security they would ensure. Need I remind the Council that the principle of land for peace is enshrined in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)?

Then there is the Mubarak plan. That plan proposes that a Palestinian State be declared, even theoretically, by next year. Specific questions such as those relating to borders, refugees and the status of Jerusalem could be discussed afterwards. The distinguished proponent of the plan believes that this option would give fresh hope to the Palestinians and also reassure Israel.

Finally, concerning the attitude of the sponsors of the peace process, we have noted with interest the path that is being explored by the United States, in particular through the Tenet mission, the William Burns mission and the personal involvement of the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and of President Bush. The efforts of the "quartet" have given us much hope, and they deserve our full support. They must continue. The proposed international conference, in order to succeed, must be prepared in a very careful and clear-sighted manner.

All of these commendable initiatives should, we believe, help us achieve genuine mutual recognition — the effective recognition of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and the effective recognition of the right of the people of Israel to live in a State with secure and recognized borders.

Let me once again appeal to the international community to find a just and lasting solution in order to put an end to this conflict. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities and strengthen the initiatives that are under way, thereby helping to restore confidence between the parties and enhance the prospects for peace. This would also have the advantage of allowing us to take action, thereby giving the lie to the opinion of some that the Council lets itself be acted upon by events.

I believe that we can allow ourselves to hope that, if both parties agree to engage in mutual negotiations, and if there is an end to the violence, the way to the broad political viewpoint that the representative of the Republic of Guinea spoke of earlier would be then be open.

The global conscience is tired of these macabre statistics. It wants peace to flourish as olive branches flourish.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

We are meeting today to once again deliberate over developments in the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Our meeting today is taking place in the context of the Security Council playing its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. A large number of representatives of the Member States of the United Nations who have spoken before me have made it clear that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has worsened due to the fact that Israel disregards its responsibilities as a member of this international Organization and defies the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Since 1948 the Security Council has adopted 28 resolutions to deal with the tragedy that has befallen the Palestinian people as a result of their persecution, repression and expulsion from their land. Israel has not implemented any of those resolutions. In this regard, we wish to refer to the resolutions adopted by the Council during the last two months, namely, resolutions 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002) and 1405 (2002), all of which were adopted unanimously and with the full support of the members of the Council. Yet, they are being treated by Israel in the same way it has treated previous resolutions.

In this context, in the last two weeks the Israeli occupation forces have resumed their practices of assassinating and killing innocent Palestinian civilians, reoccupying towns and villages, demolishing houses and destroying the infrastructure of Palestinian institutions, imposing a strangulating military siege and restricting the movement of Palestinians between their homes, villages and towns. And, in continuing its aggression on the Palestinian people, Israel is employing all the lethal weapons in its military arsenal.

Israel has not found sufficient the wide-scale destruction it has committed. It also has carried out crimes against humanity in the Jenin refugee camp and in the towns of Nablus and Ramallah, as well as in other Palestinian villages. It has done so while disregarding the appeals made by peoples from around the world, including the United Nations. According to information from reliable sources, over 75 per cent of Palestinians are living under the poverty line today as a result of Israel's repressive actions. If Israel continues such actions and its siege of the Palestinian people, that figure will rise in a few days to nearly 80 per cent or more. This raises the spectre of a real humanitarian tragedy, which requires that we stop it immediately.

Despite all these facts, the Government of Israel continues to make accusations and to assign responsibility to one Government or another based on some random statement made to the press by some Palestinian refugee who had been expelled from his land. In fact, Palestinian refugees emerged from the Jenin refugee camp to defend their rights — preferring death to a life of humiliation and suffering, which is the only thing the Israeli occupying forces had left them with. It is truly unfortunate that such Israeli accusations have fallen on ears that have listened to them and believed them.

At the end of the day, the continued existence of Palestinian refugees outside the occupied territories, in Syria and other countries, is a responsibility that falls upon Israel, which has expelled them from their land and replaced them with Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world. Israel continues to deprive these refugees of their basic human right to return to their land. But Israel does not find it sufficient to deprive Palestinians of that right, it also wants to silence their voices, and condemns anyone who shelters them and helps them to survive the very tragic conditions from which they suffer.

As we have heard today, it has become very clear to the international community that the main reason for the catastrophes and tragedies that the Middle East is experiencing is the continuation of Israel's occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria and its toying with the framework and rules of the peace process since the holding of the Madrid Conference on peace in the Middle East, in 1991. Since 1991, Israel has also tried to avoid the requirements for peace by talking about peace while it practises literally everything that contradicts peace and the principles and objectives the international community has agreed to bring about such peace, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

Those who may still have doubts about the real intentions of the Israeli Government can refer to the contents of the article by the Israeli Prime Minister that appeared a few days ago in *The New York Times*, which has been referred to in several statements today. In that article, the Prime Minister practically insulted the Security Council and the international community as a whole by distorting resolution 242 (1967) in a way that can only be condemned. In contradiction of the principle of land for peace and resolution 242 (1967),

Mr. Sharon said that Israel would neither return to the indefensible 1967 borders nor re-divide or give up Al-Quds Al-Sharif. What kind of peace does Mr. Sharon really want?

The representative of Israel has today showered us with lies and misleading statements when he referred to Syria's presidency of the Council. He also made other allegations, which the Council had previously heard many times, both within and outside this Chamber.

While the presidency of the Council will not stoop to such a low level of diplomacy, we would like to affirm here that Syria, which a majority of Member States elected to the Security Council, feels proud that the world has confidence in it and has given it such credibility. Syria affirms that it will continue in the future to work in accordance with the precious confidence that the world has placed in it.

The declared Israeli campaign against Syria and its membership of the Security Council since it was first nominated, a campaign which has continued for many years, has escalated in the recent past. It falls within the framework of a deliberate attempt to cover Israel's crimes of destruction and terrorism against the Palestinians and against their struggle for freedom and independence.

Everyone has the right to speak about terrorism except Israel and the Israeli Government, because terrorism is an essential component of the very life-blood of the Israeli Government and its officials. As for us, all we want is an end to the occupation of our Arab territory. That right is guaranteed by the Charter and United Nations resolutions.

Syria, which has made peace its strategic option, has made it clear that the peace it demands is one based on justice and the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy, and that peace cannot coexist with occupation. We have all heard that reaffirmed today.

At the recent Beirut Summit, Arab leaders formulated an initiative to bring about a just and comprehensive peace, which has received wide international support and acceptance. Now, the international community and the Security Council must exert pressure on the Israeli leaders to implement relevant Security Council resolutions and must work once again to convince them that the Arabs have rights that they will never relinquish.

Syria looks to the Security Council to take action once again, to shoulder its Charter responsibilities and to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that puts an end to occupation and restores the rights of those who lawfully possess them.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.